WeatherBlur- An Education Project of the Island Institute

Project Title: WeatherBlur- weather, climate, marine science, and more for coastal communities

Headline Title (2-5 words): WeatherBlur- blurring lines between classroom and community

Brief Summary (Abstract): Weatherblur is an interactive online platform for coastal communities to explore weather, climate, marine science, and more. It was developed using a participatory approach with a hands-on advisory board of teachers, fishermen, scientists, and education researchers. The online platform was developed during the 2012-13 school year and implemented in K-5 classrooms during the 2013-14 school year in five Maine island schools and two schools in Sitka, Alaska.

Project Location: Maine and Alaska

Partners: 5 island schools in Maine: Peaks, Cliff, Long, Chebeague, North Haven; 2 schools in Sitka Alaska: Keet Gushi Heen and the SEERS school

Background: WB is an information exchange between students, fishermen, and community members, and an opportunity to build knowledge across inter-disciplinary sectors. The WB platform creates a collaboration space for future research on the impacts of climate change on local communities. Through WB, scientists have a direct method for translating their technical research findings to a diverse audience of fishermen, teachers, community members, young students, and scientists in other fields. Students have an opportunity to become experts in locally-relevant data collection methods and investigations.

Project Goals: 1) To develop an online interactive-learning platform for coastal communities to share weather-related data and observations and to explore the impacts of climate change on their communities; 2) To provide STEM professional development to facilitate communication among teachers, students, fishermen, and scientists in order to deepen participant understanding of earth science concepts; 3) To develop a non-hierarchal, trans-generational, online learning community that brings together divers learners from around the world to discuss climate change.

Strategy Goals Implemented:
Goal 5: Increase knowledge and information on impacts of fish, wildlife, and plants in a changing climate;
Goal 6: Increase awareness and motivate action to safeguard fish, wildlife, and plants in a changing climate

Climate Impacts Addressed: warming air and water temps- impacts on marine ecosystem and community

Status of Project Implementation (Timeline, Milestones, Next Steps): Nearing completion of 2 year NSF Cyberlearning Exploration project funding. Project will continue pending funding from NSF Cyberlearning Development and Implementation project.

Project Outcomes: During the 2013 fall semester pilot, the project engaged a non-hierarchical community including elementary students (100), their teachers (10), fisherman (13), scientists (16), and community members (27). Over a six-week field test period, WB participants recorded more than 2,000 observations to the platform and created 49 summary products, including student generated graphical analyses, to document the scope of their investigations. Results from the fall 2013 field test indicate that WB resulted in statistically significant pre-post changes in students' knowledge of key climate and data literacy skills.

Funding Sources: NSF

Photos/Attachments (can be provided later if avail): see weatherblur.com for screen shots

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